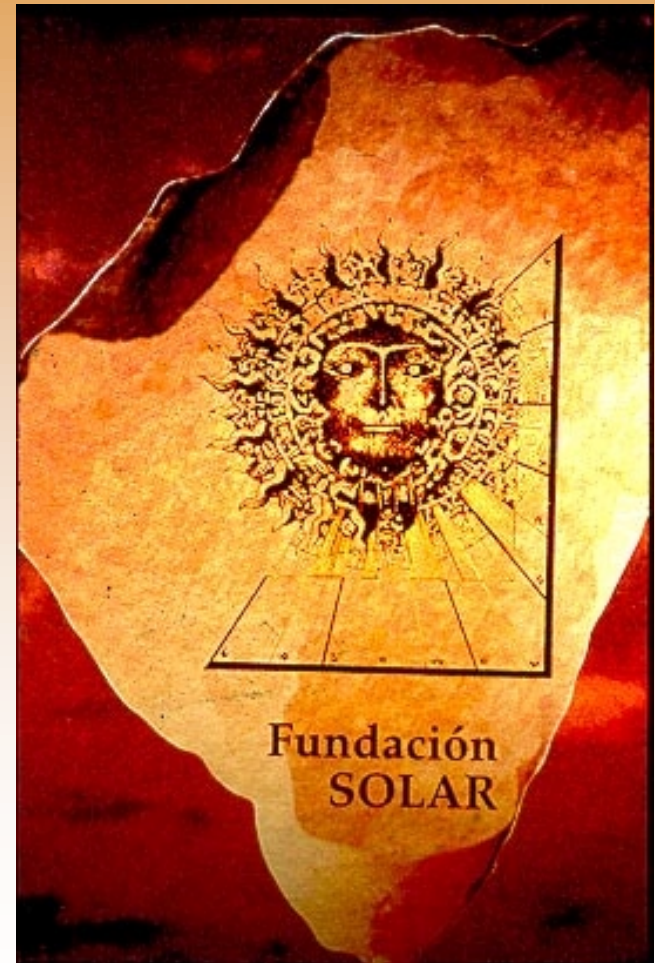


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Linking Gender and Energy in Central America: THE GENES NETWORK



Katja Winkler



Why gender and energy in Central America?

THE SITUATION

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graph TD; A[THE SITUATION] --> B[In the energy sector]; A --> C[Of Central American women];
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The diagram illustrates the situation in the energy sector for Central American women. It features a central title box at the top, with two arrows pointing down to two separate boxes below. The background is a solid orange color with a purple horizontal line near the top and a purple vertical bar on the left side. The title box has a yellow and orange diagonal striped pattern. The two boxes below are solid orange with purple borders.

**In the
energy
sector**

**Of Central
American
women**

ENERGY

- **Scarce rural electricity.**
 - **Poor population relies on biomass consumption → High deforestation.**
 - **High fossil fuel consumption.**
 - **Electric sector in transition to privatization.**
 - **Adjustments**
 - **Challenges: Social and ecological sustainability > Access to electricity services to all, including women and the poor.**
-

% OF DIFFERENT ENERGY SOURCES IN THE CENTRAL AMERICAN RESIDENCIAL SECTOR

	Wood	Electricity	Propane Gas
Guatemala	90.74	3.26	4.49
El Salvador	81.58	8.36	7.61
Honduras	88.81	7.64	2.05
Nicaragua	93.98	3.47	1.46
Costa Rica	25.88	62.44	11.07
Panamá	67.83	16.17	13.81

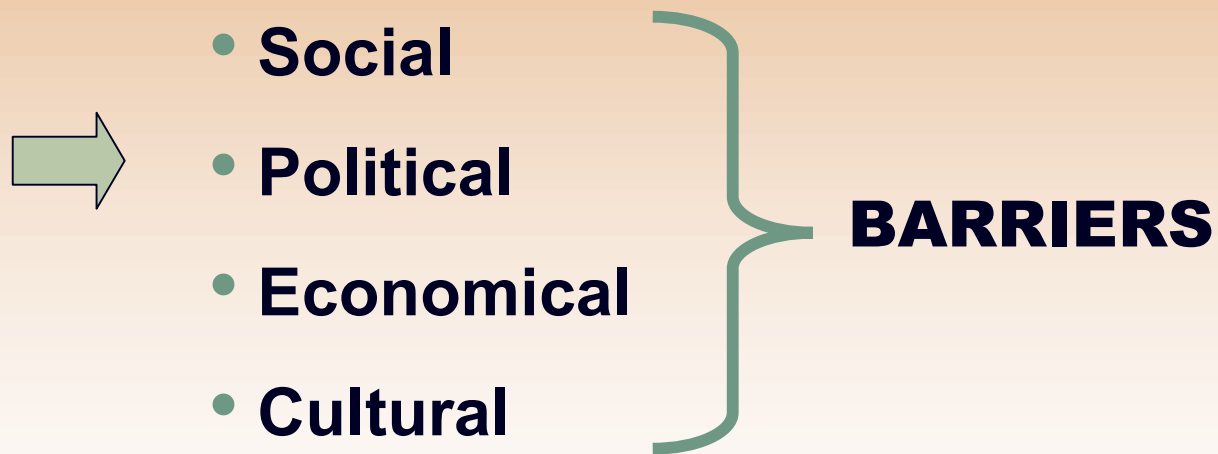
Source: OLADE , 2000

WOMEN IN CENTRAL AMERICA

- **Represent half of the population.**
 - **Higher illiteracy rate than men.**
 - **Belong to informal sector in national economies.**
 - **Earn less than men for the same labour.**
 - **Realize unrecognized additional work due to their socially conditioned role, such as cooking, cleaning and childcare.**
 - **Have less property than men (land).**
 - **Less access to credit.**
 - **Less political participation (citizenship).**
 - **Directly affected by violence and internal political conflicts.**
 - **Less participation in development projects and decisions.**
-

THE SITUATION OF CENTRAL AMERICAN WOMEN IS CHARACTERIZED BY

- Disadvantage towards men.
- High vulnerability.
- Poverty.



➡ Development without equity?

➡ Demand for women's participation

GENDER IN ENERGY

Central American women are:

- **Main energy users.**
 - **Main wood and biomass gatherers.**
 - **Take higher health risks than men.**
 - **Directly affected by energy policies and decisions.**
 - **Not fully included in energy policies, programs and projects.**
-

INITIAL DATA OF ENERGY RELATED ACTIVITIES DISAGGREGATED BY GENDER (HOURS PER DAY) IN COBÁN, ALTA VERAPAZ, GUATEMALA

Activity	Salacuim	Santa Lucía	Rocjá Purribal	San José Saijá
Firewood Gathering				
Women	1	1	--	--
Men	---	2	1	--
Water Colection				
Women	1	--	1	1
Men	--	--	--	--
Food Processing and Cooking				
Women	3	4	6	5
Men	--	--	--	--
Cleaning Activities				
Women	3	4	4	3
Men	--	--	--	--
Average Time Invested				
Women	8	9	11	9
Men	--	2	1	--
Time for Resting				
Women	--	1,5	--	2
Men	4	3	3	2

Source: Fundación Solar; 4 Rural Participatory Needs Assessments, November, 1998

GENES

The Meso-American Gender in



Sustainable Energy Network

GENES VISION AND MISSION

VISION

A region in which women and men participate with dignity in the development of an equitable society through the efficient use of energy and other natural resources to meet the needs of current and future generations.

MISSION

Promote and unify efforts in Central America to integrate gender and energy in order to foster equitable social and economic development throughout the region.

GENES OBJECTIVES

- **Increase access to sustainable energy as a means to achieve men's and women's social empowerment.**
 - **Increase genes members' participation in equitable development process through information exchange**
 - **Strengthen member organizations' internal capacity in gender and energy at all levels.**
 - **Develop projects that lead to equitable energy use and access.**
 - **Influence national policies in each country.**
 - **Support national and regional gender and energy agendas.**
-

GENES PROGRESS TO DATE

- **Communications.**
 - **Exchanges.**
 - **National and regional meetings.**
 - **Local/internal gender capacity-building**
 - **National gender and energy policies.**
 - **Coordination with other networks.**
 - **Fundraising: 2 regional proposals developed and submitted by Winrock/Fundación Solar → New partnership with ESMAP**
 - **Regional study on gender and energy developed.**
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LESSONS BEING LEARNED

- **Common elements between GENES member organizations:**
 - **Projects**
 - **Challenges**
 - **Policy efforts**
 - **Capacity – building in energy projects leads to higher equity and efficiency.**
 - **Mainstreaming gender and energy is a long – term process.**
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CHALLENGES

- Overcome identified barriers:
 - Women's underpaid work, time and energy with informal character.
 - Women's limited access to credit and renewable/sustainable energy technology.
 - Institutional lack of capacity in renewable energy technology and gender.
 - Lack of information.
 - Complete barrier identification process:
 - Providing detailed documentation, case studies and indicators.
 - Increase regional impact:
 - Designing better interventions that help to increase equity, efficiency and quality of life of men and women in the Central American region.
 - Outreach through policy – dialogue and institutional reform.
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